

Spring 2014
ENGLISH 2520-102:
INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN LITERATURE 2
Thematic Title: *Thrill and Dread in the American Century*
MWF 10:00-10:50 AM
David Straz Hall 554

Professor Gerry Canavan
Coughlin Hall 256
gerry.canavan@marquette.edu
Office Phone: 414-288-6860
Office Hours: TR 10:00 AM-12:00 PM or by appointment

“To be modern,” Marshall Berman wrote, “is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world—and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are.” This course traces the development of this tension between hope and disaster, between "thrill" and "dread," in American literature since the Civil War. In this course we will examine and interrogate this explosive sense of what it means to be “modern” with respect to themes of history and futurity, identity and difference, politics, community, war, empire, and the environment. From the private lives of individuals and families to the very public relationships that exist in and between diverse communities to the nation’s assent to global superpower status in the context of a nuclear-powered Cold War, we will find America in the post-Civil-War period understands itself as a place where anything can happen—in good ways, and in bad.

LEARNING GOALS

At the completion of a Core studies course in literature, the student will be able to:

- Produce oral and written assessments of literary and cultural texts using the language and concepts of literary study;
- Articulate how literary and cultural texts can transform one’s understanding of self, others, and communities;
- Apply the methodologies of literary criticism to representative works of literature

In addition, at the conclusion of this course the student will be able to:

- Identify and understand various formal characteristics of major texts in the modern American canon;
- Demonstrate understanding of the cultural, historical, and political contexts in which various works of literature have been produced;
- Apply techniques of critical analysis as appropriate to diverse literary forms and genres;
- Use literary study to develop skills for careful reading and clear writing;
- Read and discuss literature on the levels of both form and content.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the Book Marq on 16th Street)

Norton Anthology of American Literature, Shorter Eighth Edition (2013)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (1915)

Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (1958)

Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower* (1993)

Additional readings and course materials will occasionally be made available via ARES and D2L.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Participation	25%
D2L Forum Posts	15%
First Paper (4-6 pages)	20%
Second Paper (4-6 pages)	20%
Final Paper (6-8 pages)	20%

Detailed descriptions of the three papers will be distributed in class well in advance of the due dates.

GRADING

Grades will follow the following rubric:

* To earn a **C**, you must clearly restate the meaning or project of a text in your own terms. A C essay may volunteer an original argument, but will likely lack evidence or analysis of its sources. C essays are clearly written, though they might display some grammatical weakness.

* To earn a **B**, you must begin to raise important questions about the text under consideration and to use those questions to drive your own interpretive agenda. A B essay typically advances an original argument and provides solid analysis of the text(s) under consideration. B essays are clear, concise, and free of grammatical errors.

* To earn an **A**, you must construct an essay that does more than simply comment on the work of others; you must forward, counter, or transform what they have to say. An A essay advances an original argument that builds toward a climax and makes a persuasive case for its own significance. A essays are clearly written, and often eloquent.

* A **D** means that you have not written in clear prose or that you seem to have deeply misunderstood the text. An **F** means that you did not fully or seriously engage the assignment.

* **AB, BC, and CD** grades fall squarely in the gaps between the above categories.

FORMAT OF WRITTEN WORK

Written work must be typed in twelve-point font, double-spaced with one-inch margins, saved in a format Microsoft Word can open. Your filename should contain *your name* in it, for example, yourlastname-firstpaper.docx.

I expect you to *edit* and *proofread* all written work, even D2L forum posts. Drafts that contain excessive typos or grammar mistakes may be returned to the author for correction before I offer comments.

Please give each piece of writing an original title, and include your name, assignment, and due date in a header on the first page. Insert page numbers if your work spans more than one page.

All sources relied upon for the writing of your paper, including the primary text, must be appropriately cited.

PAPER SUBMISSION

All written work should be submitted via D2L's Dropbox by class time on the due date. **Late papers will be penalized a full grade for each day that it is late; late final papers will not be accepted at all.** Except in very unusual circumstances, work will not be accepted by email.

EXTENSIONS

Although the papers in this course have a sufficiently long timetable to allow you to plan and complete all assignments in a timely manner, I nonetheless recognize that each of you has a unique schedule and that some of the due dates I have selected could occasionally prove problematic for individual students in the course. **If you find that you will need an extension on a particular assignment due to this kind of conflict, please contact me as soon as possible to arrange an alternative due date.** Extensions will *not* be granted retroactively.

TECHNOLOGY IS TERRIBLE: PLAN AHEAD!

The Internet goes down. Files become corrupted. Computers crash. These are predictable facts of twenty-first century life, not emergencies. For this course, for all your courses, for the rest of your career and your life in this world you need to develop work habits and strategies that take into account the basic, inescapable unreliability of computers. Start your assignments well in advance of the due date; save them often; save backup copies of essential documents, including copies off-site using a service like Carbonite, Dropbox, or Google Drive.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class discussion is an essential component of this seminar; class discussion, not lecture, will be the primary means by which we will investigate these texts together. It is crucial that you come to class every day having read the required material and prepared to discuss it. **Consequently, attendance in this class is mandatory.** You should plan on attending every class. Please talk to me (in advance if possible) if you ever find you will need to miss a class meeting.

The course adheres to Marquette University's attendance policy, which can be found on the Internet at <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#attendance>.

You are allowed **four absences** over the course of the fall semester. **After that, your class participation will drop by a letter grade for each additional unexcused absence.** Upon the seventh unexcused absence, you will receive a WA (Withdrawn—Excessive Absences) for the semester.

Merely being present in class is insufficient to earn an "A" for class participation. Each student is expected to *participate in* and *contribute to* our discussions. Just being in the room is not enough.

D2L FORUMS

This course will make extensive use of the D2L forums at <http://d2l.mu.edu/>. In addition to being a place where you can find electronic copies of the syllabus and other course handouts, D2L also features an online forum where you can express your response to the material before class begins and where we can continue our discussions after class is over.

The D2L discussion forums are an excellent place for people who may feel inhibited by in-class discussion to share their opinions with the class. I will be reading the discussion forum regularly and I recommend you do the same. I encourage you to think of your D2L posts as “seeds” for the longer papers; feel free to begin to develop your thoughts there. You may choose either to begin a discussion thread on a new topic or to respond to a post composed by one of your classmates.

Before class on Friday, every student is required to take the following actions:

- * **upload a picture of their face to their D2L profile**
- * **write a short post responding to Walt Whitman’s “Song of Myself.”**

After that, students must write **four short posts** responding to **any four** texts across the remainder of the course. These posts should be completed either by midnight before one of the class discussions devoted to that text or by the midnight before the following class. At least half of the posts must be completed before Spring Break.

Additional posts, and posts that respond substantively to other students’ arguments, will be looked upon very favorably when I calculate your final grade.

EMAIL

Students in this class are required to check their official Marquette email account—whatever account D2L sends its emails to—at least once a day, in case there are any last-minute announcements or disruptions.

I endeavor to respond to all emails within 24 hours, usually much less—but please do not send me urgent emails regarding your assignments on the night before they are due and expect an immediate reply.

LAPTOP POLICY

In-class use of laptops, Kindles, iPads, etc. is permitted for access to electronic versions of our texts and for notetaking. However, students *must* refrain from non-class-related computer use, including email, instant messaging, Facebook, Twitter, and the like. I reserve the right to ban individual technological devices if this becomes a problem. No use of cell phones will be permitted during class time; please turn off your ringers and put them out of sight.

WORKSHOPS

Three days on the syllabus have been designated “workshops.” On these days you will bring in four copies of your progress towards your next major paper to share with a small group. **At a minimum this should entail an introductory paragraph; a clear and direct thesis statement with which it would be possible to disagree; and an outline of the major pieces of evidence**

you plan to discuss in the body of the paper. Attendance is mandatory on workshop days as it is on any other day in which class is in session.

CONFERENCES

In lieu of our scheduled class on March 21, **all students are required to meet with me in a short one-on-one conference at my office at least once during the semester** to discuss the course and your work within it. Please know I am very happy to meet with you individually to discuss either graded work or work-in-progress in excess of this requirement as many times as you like. Simply come to my weekly office hours, or see or email me to set up an appointment.

MOVIE NIGHT!

The week before spring break, we will have an evening screening of Stanley Kubrick's *Lolita* (1962), at a time and place to be announced.

WRITING CENTER

Students are strongly encouraged to make use of the Writing Center, located in Raynor Library Room 240, at any stage of the writing process. Please visit the Writing Center website at <http://www.marquette.edu/english/writingcenter/> to find out how to schedule an appointment and to access the studio's online resources.

FLEXIBILITY

If it will benefit the class, changes may be made to the above.

ACCOMODATIONS

Students with disabilities who believe they will require accommodations in this course should contact me early in the semester so your learning needs can be appropriately met. Per university policy, you are required to provide documentation of your disability to the Office of Disability Services.

If you are unsure of what you need to do to qualify for services, you can begin by visiting the Office of Disability Services in Marquette Hall, Lower Level, Room 05, or by visiting their website at <http://www.marquette.edu/disability-services.index.shtml>.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students are expected to abide by the academic honesty policy outlined in your undergraduate bulletin. I urge you all to examine this material and consult me with any questions you may have about plagiarism or academic integrity *before* it becomes an issue.

Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. **Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the course.** No exceptions or special dispensations will be made.

Full details of Marquette's academic integrity policy are available on the Internet at <http://bulletin.marquette.edu/undergrad/academicregulations/#academichonestypolicy>.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

We all enter this classroom with preexisting political, ethical, philosophical, and intellectual commitments. You are all required to engage the material—but you are absolutely *not* required to agree either with any of the writers we will discuss, or with me, in whole or in part.

RESPECT

This classroom is a community. It is crucial that we treat each other with the appropriate level of courtesy and respect. No one should be made to feel unwelcome here.

Failure to treat other students with the respect they deserve will **severely** negatively impact your class participation grade.

PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class as they become necessary.

Students should come to class prepared to discuss the listed texts or chapters.

Monday	January 13	Introduction to the Course
Wednesday	January 15	NA: Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself” (first half)
Friday	January 17	NA: Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself” (second half)
<i>Monday</i>	<i>January 20</i>	<i>MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY—NO CLASS</i>
<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>January 21</i>	<i>DROP/ADD ENDS</i>
Wednesday	January 22	NA: W. E. B. DuBois, <i>The Souls of Black Folk: Of Our Spiritual Strivings</i> ”; Martin Luther King, “I Have a Dream”
Friday	January 24	Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wall-Paper”
Monday	January 27	NA: Stephen Crane, “The Open Boat”
Wednesday	January 29	Charlotte Perkins Gilman, <i>Herland</i> (first half)
Friday	January 31	Charlotte Perkins Gilman, <i>Herland</i> (second half)
Monday	February 3	Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” [D2L]; The Ghost Dance [D2L] FIRST PAPER WORKSHOP DAY
Wednesday	February 5	NA: “Modernist Manifestos”: F.T. Marinetti, Mina Loy, William Carlos Williams, Langston Hughes; NA: Carl Sandburg, “Chicago”
Friday	February 7	NA: Robert Frost, poems
Monday	February 10	NA: E.E. Cummings, Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens poems FIRST PAPER DUE

Wednesday	February 12	Langston Hughes, poems; NA: Ralph Ellison, <i>Invisible Man</i> : “Battle Royal”
Friday	February 14	Shirley Jackson, “The Lottery” [ARES]
Monday	February 17	Edgar Allan Poe, “Annabel Lee” [D2L]; Vladimir Nabokov, <i>Lolita</i> , foreword and chapters 1-5
Wednesday	February 19	Vladimir Nabokov, <i>Lolita</i> , chapters 6-13
Friday	February 21	Vladimir Nabokov, <i>Lolita</i> , chapters 14-23
Monday	February 24	Vladimir Nabokov, <i>Lolita</i> , chapters 24-33
Wednesday	February 26	Vladimir Nabokov, <i>Lolita</i> , part 2, chapters 1-7
Friday	February 28	Vladimir Nabokov, <i>Lolita</i> , part 2, chapters 8-16
Monday	March 3	Vladimir Nabokov, <i>Lolita</i> , part 2, chapters 17-24
Wednesday	March 5	Vladimir Nabokov, <i>Lolita</i> , part 2, chapters 25-30
Friday	March 7	Vladimir Nabokov, <i>Lolita</i> , part 2, chapters 31-36
<i>Monday</i>	<i>March 10</i>	<i>SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS</i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>March 12</i>	<i>SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS</i>
<i>Friday</i>	<i>March 14</i>	<i>SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS</i>
Monday	March 17	NA: Flannery O’Connor, “Good Country People” SECOND PAPER WORKSHOP
Wednesday	March 19	NA: Allen Ginsberg, “Howl”; “Footnote to Howl”; “A Supermarket in California”; America” [D2L]
<i>Friday</i>	<i>March 21</i>	<i>CLASS CANCELLED / CONFERENCES</i>
Monday	March 24	NA: Sylvia Plath SECOND PAPER DUE
Wednesday	March 26	James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues” [ARES]
<i>Friday</i>	<i>March 28</i>	NA: Adrienne Rich, Amiri Baraka, Audre Lorde
Monday	March 31	NA: Thomas Pynchon, “Entropy”
Wednesday	April 2	NA: John Cheever: “The Swimmer”
Friday	April 4	Donald Barthelme, “The Joker’s Greatest Triumph!” [ARES]
Monday	April 7	NA: Toni Morrison, “Recitatif”
Wednesday	April 9	NA: Raymond Carver, “Cathedral”
<i>Friday</i>	<i>April 11</i>	Tim O’Brien, “The Things They Carried” [ARES] <i>LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW</i>
Monday	April 14	Octavia Butler, <i>Parable of the Sower</i> , chapters 1-6
Wednesday	April 16	Octavia Butler, <i>Parable of the Sower</i> , chapters 7-11
<i>Friday</i>	<i>April 18</i>	<i>EASTER HOLIDAY—NO CLASS</i>

<i>Monday</i>	<i>April 21</i>	<i>EASTER HOLIDAY—NO CLASS</i>
Wednesday	April 23	Octavia Butler, <i>Parable of the Sower</i> , chapters 12-16
Friday	April 25	Octavia Butler, <i>Parable of the Sower</i> , chapters 17-19
Monday	April 28	Octavia Butler, <i>Parable of the Sower</i> , chapters 20-22
Wednesday	April 30	Octavia Butler, <i>Parable of the Sower</i> , chapters 23-25
Friday	May 2	Readings from Octavia Butler’s Unfinished Parables [D2L] FINAL PAPER WORKSHOP LAST DAY OF CLASS
Tuesday	May 6	FINAL PAPERS DUE BY DIGITAL DROPBOX BY 10 AM